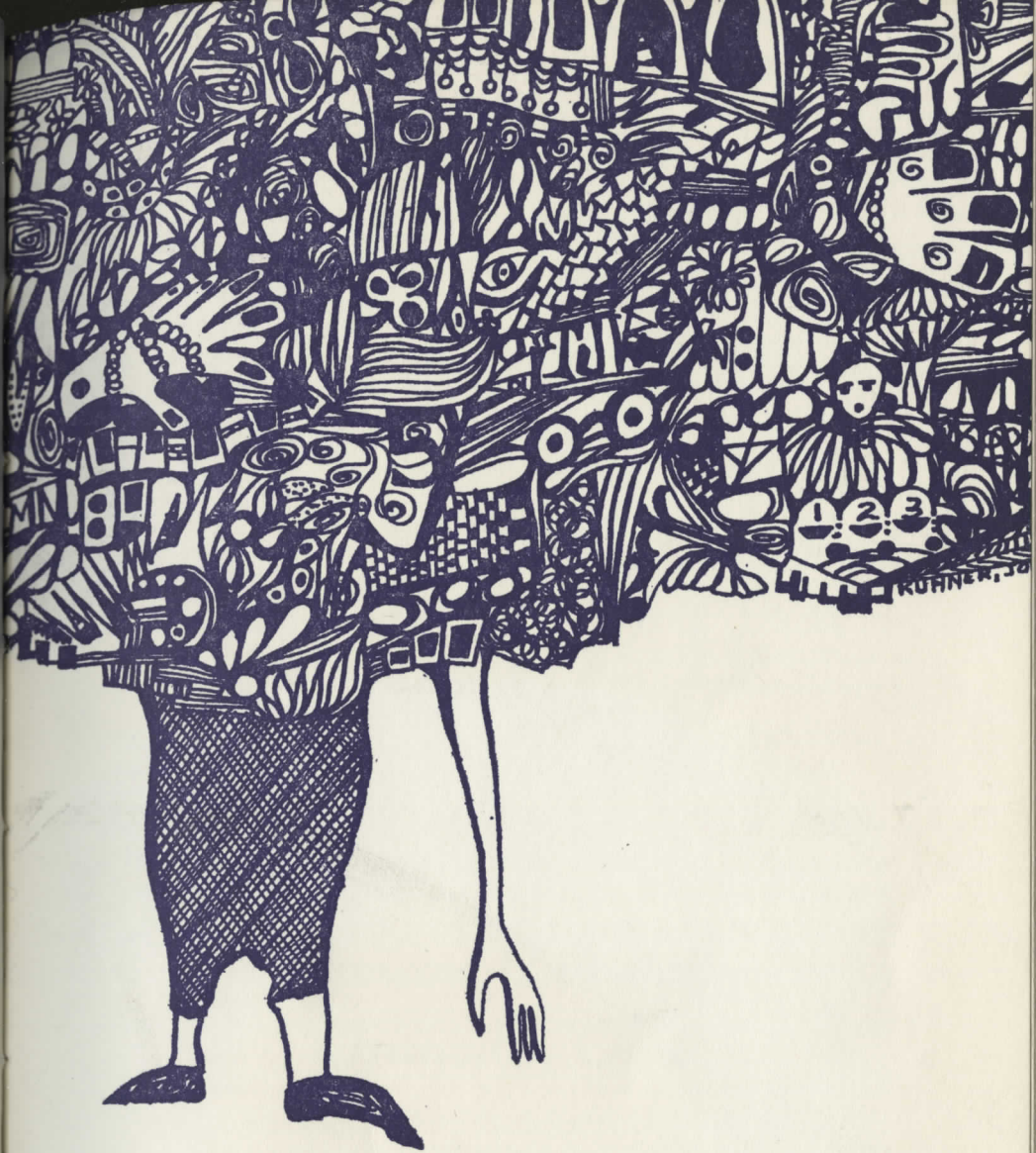

EXILE

The
EXILE

SPRING 1964 Vol. 9 No. 2

Denison University
Granville, Ohio

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm
I have beaten out my exile.
—Ezra Pound

Contributors

Bart Estes is a junior English major who spent last year in San Francisco, the scene of his story "Where All the Artists Go." Rick Boyer, Michael Glaser, Kay Stein, and Cindy Winzeler are also junior English majors who are printing in *Exile* for the first time. Bob Hoyt is a junior English major.

Senior English majors Sally Conway, Chris Cooper, and Barbara Thiele have been regular contributors to *Exile*. Carolyn Baird and Sue Smith, also senior English majors, are contributing for the first time. Next year Sally and Sue go to the University of Chicago for their Master of Arts degree, and Carolyn and Chris will teach in Cleveland. Barbara Thiele plans to go to New York. Jon Reynolds is a senior theatre major and his story is his first contribution to *Exile*. Sophomore music major Judy Pyster's poem "Song" makes this her second printing in *Exile*. Bonnie Polishook's sketch is her first contribution.

The work of senior art majors Patty Bouic, Barbara Purdy, and Liz Surbeck is familiar to *Exile's* readers. This issue, however, marks the first time that Sally Henry, also a senior art major, has published in *Exile*. Sally recently won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. Marty Merselis, a junior art major, and John Kuhner, a junior theatre major, are new contributors to *Exile*. Kathy Knapp and Lynne Wiley are sophomore art majors.

S T A F F

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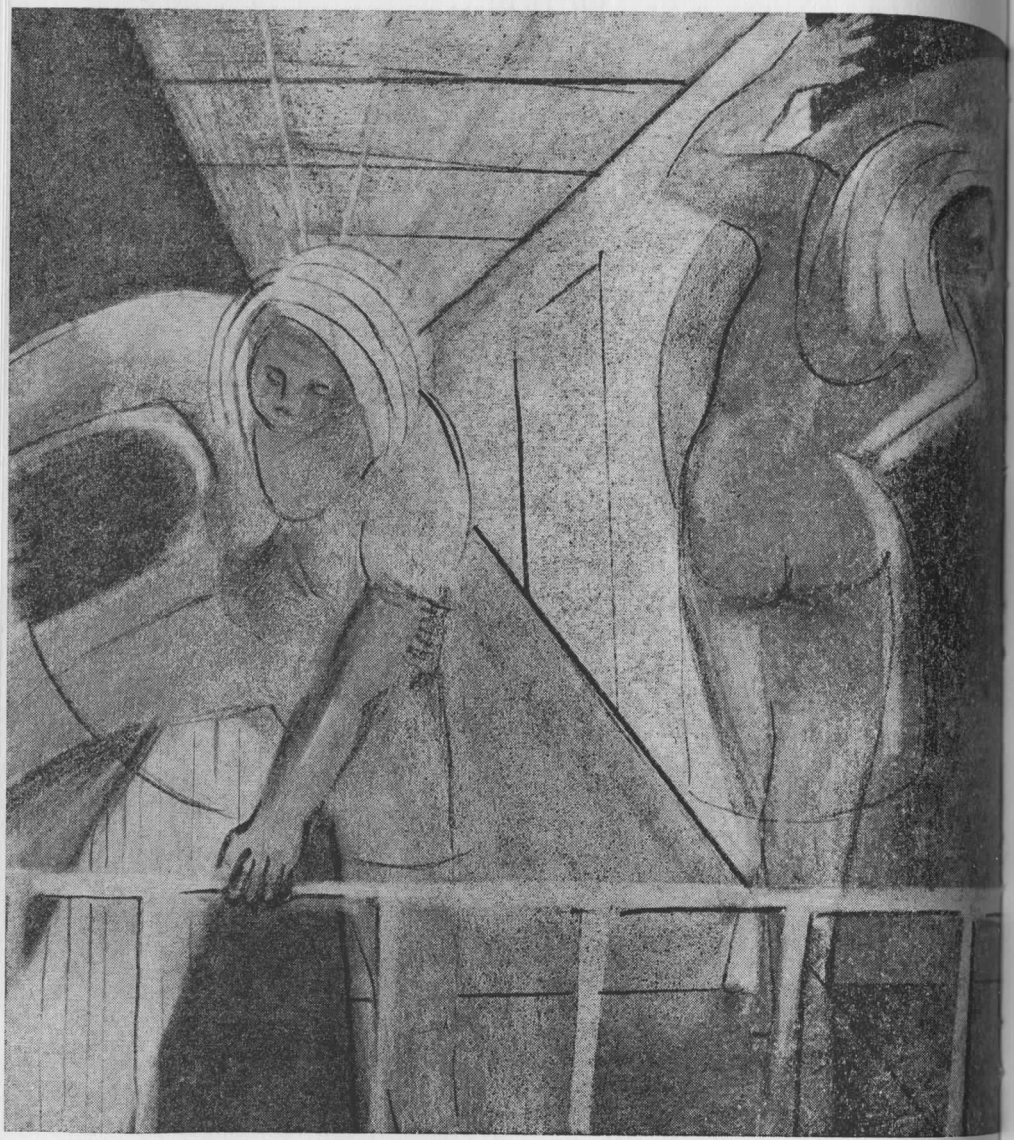
Any student of Denison may submit manuscripts of poems, stories and essays to the editors or to the EXILE box in Slayter Hall.



Editorial

About the problem of getting pickles out of the jar, it may be said that the first is always the most difficult. The same could be true—forgive the comparison—of entertaining noted writers on a college campus. But, as it turned out, Denison's first Harriet Ewens Beck Professor of English made our task an easy and pleasant one.

Miss Eudora Welty would have to be a very charming person. She would have to have a fine sense of the comic and the tragic in the lives she touches; she would have to be sharp and gentle, subtle and forthright, at the same time. Anyone who had read **The Ponder Heart** could not be satisfied with less. All of us who had the opportunity to know her briefly found that she is everything we had expected. Not the same questions over and over, not the feeding-time stampede in Huffman, not the task of eating crumbling cookies under the careful surveillance of a score of English majors could disturb her perfect equilibrium.

We have had a sample, now, of what the Harriet Ewens Beck Chair of English promises. If our future guests can be as distinguished in personal qualities as they are in name—as Miss Welty proved to be—they will surely provide an unique stimulus for creative writers and creative readers at Denison. It has been said and said and said that we are deeply grateful for the generosity of the late Gordon Clark Beck, who made the Harriet Ewens Beck Chair possible. But here, for the record, let it be said again. And, again, thank you, Miss Welty, for making our first venture in this new program such an enjoyable and enlightening one.

S. S.

ROBERT & MURIEL OR, IF YOU THINK OF THE GIRL YOU LOVE TOO MUCH AS SOMEDAY BEING BALD, YOU CAN ALWAYS REMAIN ALOOF

by Jon Reynolds

Robert pushed the small white button next to the door and then shuffled his feet on the carpet. His shoes were polished and shined a dark, rich black, but a small scuff spot was noticeable on the tip. He leaned down and wiped it away with his handkerchief. The shoes glistened from the rain falling on the pavement fourteen stories below. The treacherous and A-OKAY New York taxicabs honked, and Robert, looking out the small window which was next to the elevator, saw lights on the cabs and the other cars as they furiously pursued their destinations. Streetlights reflected off the wet pavement—a shine from the streets made of asphalt, a dazzle of tiny dots from the concrete sidewalks. He released the curtain covering the window and ran his hand through his wet hair.

His rained-upon index finger pushed at the buzzer again, and from inside he heard a scurrying of feet, not at all like rats and with no evidence that there was broken glass on the floor, and what sounded like two female voices in a low whisper fiercely bulletining orders at each other. Visions of sugar plums and a naked Muriel danced in his head. He wiped his forehead with his wet palm, and, then realizing this did no good, he wiped the palm on his overcoat and then applied its dryness to his forehead; the rain had been wet. He was afraid to wipe his hair with his coat, not because such action would place large amounts of Wildroot Cream Oil Charlie on the coat, but because such action would mess up his hair.

The voices inside still indicated that there was some sort of argument going on, and the whispering made the argument sound all the more ominous to Robert, who listened but could hear nothing. Presently he forgot the conversation inside, which still continued, and noticed that his head was beginning to itch. The rain had joined with the Wildroot and with the mysteries and unknowns of the outer surface of the scalp, and had begun to itch. For the same

reason that he was afraid to apply his raincoat to his hair, Robert was afraid to give his scalp the pleasurable and thorough scratching it deserved, and instead he extended his forefinger and meekly began to wedge it between strands of hair, hoping to reach both the most itchy and the least dense section. His finger descended onto the scalp, the first joint began to undulate, and before long, his invaluable finger was jumping from itchy patch to itchy patch, scratching back and forth, in very small scratches, until he felt somewhat relieved.

Suddenly the voices inside stopped, and Robert could hear someone approaching. Trumpets sounded. He knew it would be Muriel, thoughtfully arriving at the door completely naked. She loved to pamper his every whim, and a nude answering her apartment doorbell was, at the moment, his every whim. An eye looked at him through the peep sight in the door. He smiled adolescently. The chain lock was unhitched. The knob turned, the door opened, and then it was only Muriel's mother.

"Hello, Robert," she smiled and smiled and smiled, clutching at the top of her bathrobe to make sure that not only were her invaluable, incomparable, unmatchable, irreplaceable, unsurpassable, and most revered breasts covered, but also the better part of her neck; even the tip of the collar on her robe touched a point on her chin. She held the door open with one hand and the robe closed with the other. She peered around the door so that Robert could see only her head and her clutching, **vital** hand, while the rest of her twisted around the door and was hidden from the eyes of the neighbors across the hall, who, after all, were interested only in seeing Muriel's mother in a bathrobe, and who were more than anxious to sneak out into the hall to catch a glimpse of the overweight, overdyed, overwrinkled, overwrought, overtroubled, overrobed Mother of Muriel. She smiled again, or, rather smiled continuously. "Come in; Muriel will be out in a minute. May I take your coat?"

Robert entered the apartment, from one thick carpet outside the door to an even thicker one inside, and Mother of Muriel let the door close by itself. She padded thickslippered feet across the thick carpet, and Robert followed her for a few steps, not realizing she was retreating to knock upon Muriel's bedroom door. She turned suddenly and gave him a look of sharp surprise when she decided Robert was following her into Muriel's room. She knocked on the door.

"Dee-yer," Muriel's mother said in a tone that made it quite obvious that she and her daughter had never once, not ever, what, never, no, not even hardly ever, just simply not ever (never) had an argument. She cooed. She coyly called. She cloyly clamored. She carelessly carolled. She pleasantly, very pleasantly, without a glimpse of anger, without a touch of irritation, but with just a little bit of gaiety, jolliness, juantiness, jocundity, mellowly said again, "Dee-yer." She was about to sing.

And from the confines of Muriel's room came the reply. "Ye-es?" In that pleasant, supersweet, cute-as-a-bunny, fluid, obviously correctly placed voice that seemed as though Mother of Muriel were using her fantastic knack for ventriloquism to project her own voice through the door. But Robert wasn't fooled. He knew it was Muriel in there, regardless of how much the voices and intonations were alike. Muriel and her mother constituted the only family on the entire island of Manhattan whose vocal intonations were hereditary.

After closing Muriel's and Muriel's mother's mother's daughter's apartment door, and after Muriel had bid her mother a jaunty, jolly, supersincere good night, and after Robert had hung up his coat and then put it on again, and after Muriel had added the proper amounts of perfume and foam rubber to figure and face, face and figure, and after Muriel's superswell mother had warned Muriel not to stay out very late, and after Robert had stood on one foot and then the other and scratched his scalp several times, and after he had mumbled a good evening to Muriel, and grumbled a good evening to Muriel, and bumbled his act with Muriel, and fumbled with his Surgeon General pipe with Muriel, finally, ultimately, presently, after a while, after a short but extremely pleasant, short and honestly not overly saccharine visit with Muriel's mother, the couple who will someday (and that day is creeping closer and closer) be tomorrow's leaders, hotfooted it out the door.

"Well," said Robert with self-acknowledged cracker-jack wit.

"Ummm," said Muriel, as she pushed the elevator button with that unbelievably indispensable forefinger, which she, like Robert, and like others not only on her own floor and in her particular social stratum, but others who overused their forefingers (baseball umpires, for example) possessed.

The evening was off to a rousing start. Robert had said, "Well." Muriel had said "Ummm." Muriel had also pushed the elevator button (which Robert should, really honestly should have done; just

as, because of the extremely dangerous and probable action that occurs when garbage is thrown on that part of the sidewalk closest to the street, Robert honestly, really should have walked on the street side of Muriel a few minutes later).

Since Muriel had not only said one word, "Ummm," but done one thing, pushed the elevator button, and Robert had only said one thing, "Well," well both of them were anxiously waiting to see what Robert could possibly do, what he could possibly dream up in his sensitive creative artist's imagination to challenge the brilliance of Muriel's forefinger. So, utilizing his own forefinger, which was not original, he scratched his head, which was original (compared to Muriel's pressing the elevator button).

Once the two were outside in the Mellow Evening, they walked boyishly and girlishly down Park Avenue in search of a taxi. While they waited on the street corner for the traffic signal to change, Robert looked at Muriel's beauty from the side of his eye, literally the side of his eye, which maniacally protruded from his temple. She was really quite lovely, he thought, and though for a moment he wanted to look a little closer into her, or at her, he soon gave up the idea, grabbed her hand aggresively but forcefully—an act which he knew would immediately and imperatively relate to Muriel that she was out with a dominating man—and marched halfway across the street to wave at a cab.

Almost immediately a yellow and red taxi with its roof light glowing a bright yellow passed by Muriel and Robert and then stopped, as is customary. Robert walked uprightly to the cab, still holding Muriel's hand overtightly (the better to affectionately protect you, my dear) in his own. He boldly opened the door, and Muriel, who was not a big girl, but who was a tall girl, a tall and thin girl, a fragile girl, a blonde, fragile girl with pouting lips and long legs, a meagre chest development, but with very long legs, began to crawl across the seat of the taxi with the low roof, in order to reach the proper sitting position in relation to Robert (it was mandatory, of course, that she be on his left in a taxicab). Robert stood holding the door waiting for Muriel of the Fragile Eyes to maneuver those long girl legs into position. He liked the long girl legs. Finally he stepped into the cab, ran his fingers through his hair (in a moment of wild abandon), and sat down happily. For several moments he sat in the car (he had closed the door) and absolutely refused to tell the driver where to go. His refusal was based not so much upon an unwillingness to cooperate, nor was it

based upon any form of prejudice against this particular cab driver—or against cab drivers in general, nor was it based upon his iconoclasm as a human being or an individual, nor was it based upon the floundering condition of the Mets. He had simply forgotten to tell the driver where to go. Consequently, the taxi rested on Park Avenue, the meter ticking and clicking and batting its eyelashes, while the cab driver, who thought that Robert was either getting adjusted to his seat or that he was in a moment of temporary confusion, rested his back on his own seat, and Robert, not understanding why the cab driver was not progressing, fidgeted arclightly.

Finally, Muriel, the only rational being in the taxi, asked Robert where they were going. It was then that Robert remembered that he had to tell the driver which movie theatre to drive to, and it was then that Robert of the Falling Hair remembered that he didn't remember which movie he had decided to take Muriel to. So he shifted his weight on the seat and looked at Muriel.

"Is there anything particular you'd like to see?" he asked with furrowed brow, running a thumb across his obviously honestly confused forehead, as he had seen done so often.

"I have not seen . . ." Muriel began in tones which denoted there was very little she had not seen, done, read, visited, criticized, glorified in, and left embellished with the very erudite Muriel Artistic Taste.

"Have you seen . . .?" Robert began in an almost patronizing, pleading way. He stopped talking immediately, however, when he realized Muriel was saying "I have not seen . . ." to him, and, of course, to round out the conversation, Muriel stopped talking when he said, "Have you seen . . .?" and both sat for a moment, wordless, motionless, waiting either for the other person to say something or for each individually to make a gesture to indicate that he or she should speak.

Finally, the taxi driver turned around in his seat to face them in their marvelously Adolescent Dilemma. Both were obviously, but engagingly, one might even say ingratiatingly, shy. The cab driver, though he by all means had a heart of gold and cared not how long he waited in the middle of Park Avenue, was becoming just a teeny, tiny, tiddly touch impatient.

"Where to?" he said, snarling and vicious.

Robert looked at Muriel, Muriel looked at Robert, then Robert looked from Muriel to the driver, back to Muriel, and then looked

at his feet, while Muriel, in the same length of time, looked at Robert and then looked at the taxi driver and then stared at the meter. Robert, suddenly inspired, said, "Have you seen the Bergman picture?" Muriel said she hadn't but would oooh love to, yes, she'd just yoweee love to, she would always be in if she saw it now, she'd consider it the highlight of her social career to see the golly Bergman picture, the black and white, integrated, Bergman picture. Robert told the driver to go to the theatre where the Bergman picture was playing, the Theatre of Bergman Picture address, and all three relaxed a bit as the driver accelerated (and with him, the car).

After the Dilemma of the Taxi, and the Dilemma of the Popcorn, and the Dilemma of the Smoking Permitted Loge, and the Dilemma of the English Cartoon that made them realize they were, once and for all, in an art, Art, ART theatre, and after the Dilemma of Removing Their Overcoats Without Standing Up, and the Dilemma of Not Putting Their Cigarette Ashes on the Carpet of the ART Theatre, but having to Explore Around in the Dark for the Silly Little Ashtrays on the back of the Seat in Front of Them, and the Dilemma of Robert's Successfully Putting his Arm Around Muriel's Shoulders—not, of course, to imply anything suggestive, but as sophisticated daters do, and the Dilemma of Sighing with Complete Intellectual, Physical, and Emotional Relief, as a sign of really having been emotionally fulfilled—and significantly (oh boy significantly) disturbed by the probing social questions examined; after all these dilemmas and the Dilemma of Which Club to go to, and the Dilemma of Still Having to Show Identification that proved that they both really were twenty, there was The Dilemma, the extra added, motley-colored, tricky but not impossible, dangerous but not hopeless, thoroughly nerve-wracking Dilemma of Getting Muriel to Let Him Kiss Her and then Getting Muriel to Let Her Kiss Him.

For some unknown reason (which actually, in deepest, most honest reality is not unknown), Robert decided Reuben's was the place to go. Reuben's had cheesecake and was very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very expensive. Robert knew this but decided that he was both wealthy enough and enough interested in kissing Muriel to spend the extra money for a drink, especially since Reuben's is, after all, where the stars go, yes, yes, all the big Broadway names like Tippy Skuttles, John Bunny, Randolph Makehin, and Helen Twelvetrees.

With the thought of kissing Muriel—and kissing Muriel several times and hearing fast breathing and uttering brilliant and imaginative words, and of just the Idea of Kissing Muriel—firing up the back of his head, Robert and Muriel, Muriel's Robert Forever, strolled, strolled, waltzed, gaily tripping, lightly skipping, jaunted, jollied, gambolled into Reuben's, were greeted by the head waiter, and sat down, suddenly not gambolling anymore, but now sophisticating, suaving into their seats.

"Well," Robert said.

"This is very nice," Muriel said.

The couple ordered their supersweet cocktails and plunged headlong into an esoteric conversation that, if overheard, would have stimulated any cinema critic to ecstatic adulation at the perceptive observations of the mature couple in the corner.

"What did you think of the film?" said Robert, looking intently into the eyes of Muriel's sockets. Oh, what did you think? And why do you think? and tell me all you want to about the film, and what will you think? Later?

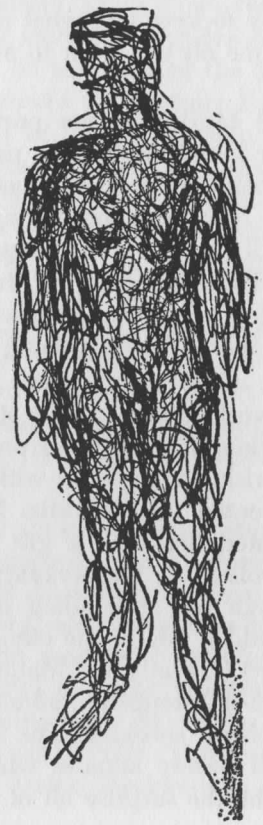
"As I see it," said Muriel, as her pupils looked heavenward, her brow wrinkled, her mouth winced in pain at the strain (of the pain of the rain on the plain in the train of her brain) of thought, deep thought—depth; for if there was one thing Muriel was not, she was not depth-decrepid! "It was an attempt," again, she struggled for the word, for the syllabic montage, for the correct and applicable choice of highly acceptable—perhaps even a little startling—verbiage to flow smoothly from those oh-so ravishing lips.

"As I see it, it was an attempt to show the lack of communication that exists in the world today." Every single person in Reuben's rose to his feet in ovation. The applause reverberated from wall to wall; a waiter walked briskly to the table with a bouquet of American Beauty Roses and presented them to Miss Muriel; the head waiter came forth and presented her with a gift certificate to Reuben's, and still the applause rolled on; the honorary mayor craftily, waftily wended his way through the applauding onlookers and presented her with a diamond studded key to the city; the greats of stage and screen alike—the Edward C. Platts, the Mannie Semblants, the Sonny Tuftses, the Bert Parkses—all stopped to admire this ideal of American youth. Finally, the applause subsided. The service at Reuben's had been held up for a full twenty minutes while Miss Muriel became the celebrity of the night, the surprise hit of the theatrical season.

"I think that's quite true," said Robert. When the drinks came, they raised their glasses and drank quickly. Robert placed his hand over Muriel's and looked supersincerely into her eyes, past the pupil and cornea, into the retina, the iris, the tiny cones, and focused on the lens.

Simultaneously he lowered his voice and moved closer to the table. Miss Muriel beamed and sparkled, ready, one way or another. But Robert of the Subtleties just stared into her eyes with super-dupercolossalBronstoniansincerity; after a few moments, when he sensed his eyes were beginning to tire, he allowed a fleeting smile to pass over his lips, as one does, of course, in the Foreign Legion. He released her hand and laughed at a private joke, sadly, feeling the bullet in his stomach.

"You puzzle me, Robert," Miss Muriel of the Roses said. And Robert knew the victory was won.



QUENTIN MARSH

by Bonnie Polishook

Quentin Marsh left school in his senior year. He most emphatically did not leave school to find himself. He did not, moreover, leave school to support a cause, or himself, or even, much to her distress, the wife whom he had recently acquired. He moved ten books, a toaster, and three dishes from an apartment near the Charles to a shack in Vermont. He moved his wife to Larchmont with his parents. He sat on a bus with a copy of **The Canterbury Tales** and a copy of the **Iliad.** He fully intended to translate the **Iliad** into Middle English. "There is a place," he said, "for Middle English translations of the **Iliad.**" And surely this was true.

Arriving in Fordsville, Vermont, population 258, he purchased three pencils, a green plastic pencil sharpener, an abundance of ruled paper, fourteen cans of Chef-Boy-R-Dee Ravioli, a loaf of bread, and a bottle of milk at the Pine General Store. After informing Mr. Pine, proud proprietor of the Pine General Store, that he would receive no mail and that his scholarly endeavors required no interruptions, he set off in the snow for his shack. The night being crisp and the moon generous, he had no trouble maintaining his direction and upon arriving plunged immediately into his translation.

Three years later, his wife remarried.

Four years later, a more gaunt and more dignified Quentin Marsh presented his masterpiece in the original and only copy to the Yale library to provide material for generations of future scholars. It was filed under Ancient Literature, and full credit was given to Homer for the versatility and universality of his verse. Afraid the eager students of Yale University might pursue an interview, Quentin Marsh changed his hermitage to a shack in New Hampshire, and got on a bus with his now worn copies of **The Canterbury Tales** and the **Iliad,** each bound together with a rubber band. He had every intention of continuing to contribute to the vast field of scholarship by translating Chaucer into ancient Greek. "There is a place," he said, "for Ancient Greek translations of Chaucer."

USED TO BE

by Susan Smith

Used to be I'd come home of an afternoon on the Evansville-Fall River school bus, which could rattle your eyeballs from here to Sunday, bouncing around on the seat with Billy Dunlap and just carrying on. Billy Dunlap's family come up from Tennessee a couple generations back bringing nothing but trouble, but Billy Dunlap could do this South African bird call that would just kill you. Then Mr. Hubbard the bus driver—who we called Old Mother Hubbard, giving everybody nick-names like kids will—would yell at us to mind ourselves or we could just walk home. Sometimes my dad would be up by the bridge on the tractor, and he'd wave and I'd yell to him "Beat you home!" Which I would, of course, because the school bus is faster, even though the road way is longer than across the field. Lord, the house seemed big then, that seems to have shrunk down into the ground now, and seemed to stand so proud in behind the four big pines. I'd jump down out of the school bus and throw a piece of dirt back at Billy Dunlap, who'd be doing a bird call at me out of the window, then the school bus would take off in a dust storm and I'd crawl down into the ditch after the newspaper. I don't think Harding Dunlap, who's Billy's big brother and drives the paper truck, ever hit the road once. He's almost thirty years old now and he still hasn't hit the road once that I can remember.

I'd open up the paper and read the headlines while I was walking up the road so I could tell Dad when he'd ask me what Roosevelt was up to these days. We got the Cincinnati paper, just like everyone in Brown County does, and there'd always be something about Roosevelt in the headlines with the war coming on overseas. I wouldn't go into the house because Ma was always sick even then, and she'd start yelling for me to come and talk to her, which I wouldn't be ready to do just then, in the early afternoon. But I'd sit out on the fence instead, until I'd see Dad coming. He'd put the tractor up in the shed and come up to me saying, "Well, Sissy, what's Roosevelt up to these days?" Then I'd tell him whatever the headlines said and we'd sit and talk about just anything for a while, until it was time for him to go down to the barn and for me to go in and start fixing supper.

I'd fix up a big piece of beef or pork—my dad, being a county commissioner, could get nice meat even then—with thick gravy and potatoes and coffee that could just walk itself right over to the table if it wanted to, and the two of us would eat there in the kitchen together. Ma would have her supper on a tray in her room usually. Sometimes Dad and I would play a game of listing all the counties in Ohio or all the states, and sometimes he'd talk about before he was married, how he'd bummed around the country to Omaha and Kansas City and Tulsa and had shook the hand of William Jennings Bryan in Oklahoma City. I'd hardly listen, because I'd heard all the stories before, but I'd watch him, the way his face would move when he talked and the way his eyes would stare straight into me. My dad was a tall fine-looking man with hair and skin rusty from the sun and the bluest blue eyes there ever were. He'd always say we were two peas in a pod, that I looked just like him, and I was glad to think I did.

Oh, I was pretty then, and smart too! I could of had a million boyfriends if I'd ever given any of them a turn. But my dad always said that smart came first and pretty second. And he always said too that if a girl had a million boyfriends, like Lorraine Shuck did, and some others, she must be an easy ticket. Which was true—about Lorraine Shuck, anyway. When we'd talk about things like that, I'd always say that he was my only true love. Then he'd talk about how he was saving up for me to go down to Cincy for college. I knew nothing would ever come of it—Lord, if I'd tell you just half the things he was always saving up to get, you wouldn't believe it! But I'd just let him talk, because he seemed to get a kick out of planning it. It wasn't his fault he could never save up for anything—he just couldn't hang onto a dime with the farm and the Depression and Ma's prescriptions. "We've had a hard time, Sissy," he'd say, "but our time's coming." He really believed that, and I pretended to believe it right along with him, because somebody had to.

Then in a little while I'd clean up the supper things and start in doing my homework in the kitchen, where the light was decent, and he'd go up and sit with Ma. I'd try not to listen to what they were saying, but you can hear everything for miles around in the country, it being so still. They'd argue most of the time, or rather Ma'd argue and Dad would just listen. You couldn't cross her in the littlest thing, the way she was, or she'd take your head off. Sometimes Dad would start arguing back, and then I'd go outside

for a walk or down to the barn. Might as well—I couldn't do my studies anyway when it got that way.

The time I got tularemia and almost died of it, Ma seemed to get better for a little while. When the fever was on, I'd think I saw her looking at me in the night, with her eyes wild and her face down close to mine. Then I'd have dreams about getting on the bus for Cincy and Ma would be the bus driver, yelling for me to hurry up—yelling, mind yourself now or you can just **walk.** And when the bus would pass by the bridge, there'd be my dad sitting on the tractor wheel and waving after me. But then I'd wake up in the morning and find her more cheerful than ever, and bringing me my medicine.

Not long after I got well we got a car—a crazy old Ford with moth-eaten cushions and a rattle like you've never heard—and Dad and I would always go for a ride of an evening. Ma never went—when I'd go up and ask her if she wasn't coming along on the ride she'd say she wasn't asked. Then I'd say, "Well, you're asked now," and she'd say "No, thank you just the same" and that she had this terrible dizzy spell come on or this terrible upset stomach or this terrible something else. So just Dad and I would go. I swear to you, she got sick just when it pleased her to, which was most of the time. All Dr. Mayhew could figure out about her was that she was naturally weak and nervous, and he'd give her nerve pills at twelve cents a throw—I figured it out once—and tell us to keep her quiet and see she didn't get upset. Which was easy enough for him to say.

The night Dad died, I'll never forget I was going to the movies with Harold Shuck, who was Lorraine's brother, but you shouldn't judge him by that. He was a nice boy and I went around with him for quite a while. Anyway, Dad said to me that he had thought the two of us, Dad and me, might go up to Evansville for the Methodist chili supper. But I told him that I had already promised Harold, and anyway we still had half a chicken from the night before to finish up. I knew it hurt his feelings, but Harold was handsome and very smart and going to be a lawyer— and I **had** promised him. So I went ahead and went to the movies with him. He drove his father's car, which was a big gorgeous Studebaker—his father was a lawyer up in Fall River—and it broke down on the way home from the movies. Smart as he was in his subjects at school, Harold was an awful dumbell about cars. But of course he

wouldn't admit it, so we sat out on the county road for what must of been a solid hour while he fooled around in the motor, when we could of just walked a mile up the road and got somebody out there to fix it that knew something.

Well, anyway, it must of been past one in the morning before we got to my house, and Harold said maybe he should come in and explain to my dad—he had all the manners his sister didn't have. But I said it'd be all right, and that he should just go ahead home and worry about explaining to his dad. Well, it wasn't all right. Dad was still up and half crazy, he said, with worrying about me. And he really acted half crazy, yelling at me about getting to be a slut like Lorraine Shuck, and the flashy family Harold came from he didn't wonder he'd kept me out half the night. I started to yell back at him and then he slapped me across the face, which he'd never done ever before. Then I started in crying and he did too, and he grabbed me and kissed me all over the face and on the mouth, all the time saying over and over, "Oh, my baby! Oh, my baby!" With the yelling and crying, it wasn't long before Ma came down, and she stood there staring at us with her wild eyes and screaming "What are you doing? What are you doing?" And before either of us could stop her she ran out the kitchen door and fainted out cold on the stoop.

Whenever I think of that night, all I can think of is my ma standing there holding onto the banister and screaming at us "What are you doing?" over and over. After she ran out the door my dad ran out after her and then carried her upstairs to her bed. He was still crying when he ran out to go for the doctor. He was killed in an accident out on the county road. There must of been not more than seven or eight cars in the whole county, but he met one of them on the road up near Evansville. The fellow driving the other car was banged up some, but not too bad, and he said Dad was going too fast and swerved over into the left-hand lane in front of him. I know Dad must of had his mind on going for the doctor and on me waiting back there half scared to death.

That was eight years ago—just over eight—but it might as well of been a hundred for the changes in this place. Because you never saw it when he was alive you can't know what the change has been. As I remember it, it was always green—the pine trees and the fields and even a little green dribble up the center of the dirt road. But I know that's not right, because there were dry spells just like there are now and long gray winters. But what I

remember is the fields in the summer—deep, deep green like new corduroy and smelling like life itself. I just can't keep the place up anymore, with Ma to look after and my job up at Evansville. I got this job up at Evansville in the bank—or, rather, Harold Shuck's father got it for me. Not that I'm complaining about the place here—it'll do well enough and Jessie Dunlap, that's Harding Dunlap's little girl, comes in to help out and look after Ma while I'm at work.

And I hardly ever think about Dad and how he died. Can't afford to. When I start in thinking about it, it nearly kills me, and I'm liable to do just about anything. Like tonight. Tonight I came home from work about five-thirty, like always, and crawled down into the ditch to get the newspaper, and almost choked to death on the dust. It seems like there's dust about a foot thick on everything lately. Well, I sat out in the car beside the house for a while and just looked around. I looked at the house, slouching down against the pine trees like it was embarrassed for the way it looks and was trying to hide. And I looked at the pot-bellied screen door with the flies beating their heads against the screen trying to get into the house. And then I looked at Jessie Dunlap's old dog heaped up in the road in front of me and not even bothering to twitch the flies off his head.

I started thinking then, which I never should of done, and I thought about Dad and how the farm was falling apart and the grass and weeds growing up to cover it over. And pretty soon it would be all just like he had never lived here at all and never sat on the tractor by the bridge or told his stories about Omaha and Tulsa and shaking the hand of William Jennings Bryan. Then the dust and William Jennings Bryan and my dad started spinning around in my head until I thought I was going to vomit, so I got up and came into the house.

There in the kitchen, sniveling back in the corner by the ice-box was Jessie Dunlap, and she had a little squirming kitten in her arms. Well, she started pestering me about how Harding was going to make her drown it and could she keep it here, and I said, "No, and that's the end of it." And then I said, "You get on home now and tell your Ma you're to spend the night here and look after Mrs. Bright." Lord, I've got nothing against kittens, and this was a cute little thing, but I just couldn't take it right then. She whined around about it some more, and I finally said "You

go on now and take that cat with you. I'm going to the movies with my boyfriend and I don't want to have to wait around. So go on." And all this time my ma keeps calling to me from the other room to come in and talk to her. "That you, Sarah Ruth?" she keeps calling. My dad was the only one called me Sissy. Everyone else, including my ma, calls me by my Christian name. Then, "Come on in and talk to me," she keeps calling.

Well, I felt sorry for Jessie—God knows, you'd have to feel sorry for her. Such a homely little thing and such ugly dresses she wears. But all this time Ma was calling and Jessie pestering, so I just yelled at her, "Get on out of here and don't bring that cat back. I'm warning you!"

I went on into the parlor then, after Jessie left, and right away Roy called—that's my new boyfriend. Harold Shuck got married—had to I hear—to a girl down in Cincy where he went to college. So I've been going around with Roy quite a bit lately. Well, anyway, Roy called and with thinking about Dad and with Jessie and Ma both yelling at me I just wasn't in the mood to talk to him. He said, "Hello, Sweetheart, are you home from work," which he always says, or something just as silly. And so I said no, I wasn't home from work and why didn't he call back later when I'd probably be home. By this time I didn't want to go to the movies anyway, and I was half hoping he'd get mad enough to hang up on me. But he didn't—he just said, "Geesh, what a grouch!" which he picked up from somebody on television and thinks is a very smart thing to say in any situation. Then he asked me whether I'd rather see "Dark Stranger" with Clark Gable and Carole Lombard or some other movie which I didn't even remember the name of. The reason I remember "Dark Stranger" is that we already saw it not two months ago, which I patiently explained to him. I had to tell him almost the whole story before he remembered. Anyway, I finally said we'd decide about it later and told him to pick me up at 7:00. Roy is a very interesting person and can be very nice, but sometimes, like tonight when I'd been thinking about my dad and everything, I just don't want him to talk to me or touch me or even look at me. I don't know. I can't explain it.

After talking to Roy on the telephone I went in to see if Ma needed anything. She got worse than ever after Dad died, so Billy Dunlap and I moved all of her bedroom furniture down to the sitting room, and she stays there now. I think she could get up

and around if she'd just try, but she won't and I'm not going to hound her. Well, anyway, I went in to see if she wanted anything and all she wanted was a stick of chewing gum, which I gave her.

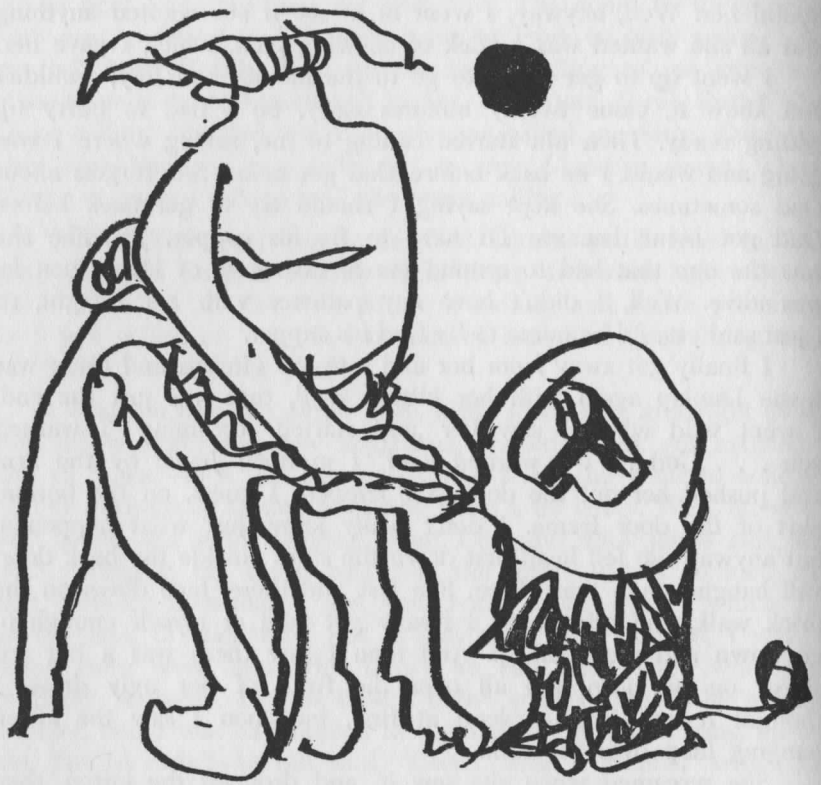
I went up to get ready to go to the movies and Roy, wouldn't you know it, came twenty minutes early. So I had to hurry up getting ready. Then Ma started calling to me, asking where I was going and would I be back before Dad got home. She forgets about Dad sometimes. She kept saying I should try to get back before Dad got home because I'd have to fix his supper. Just like **she** was the one that had to remind **me** to take care of Dad when he was alive. Well, I didn't have any patience with her tonight, so I just said yes, I'd be home to fix Dad his supper.

I finally got away from her and into the kitchen and there was Jessie Dunlap again with her kitten. Well, that was just the end. I went wild when I saw her ,and started screaming "I warned you . . . God . . . I **warned** you!" I grabbed Jessie by the arm and pushed her out the door. She tripped, I guess, on the bottom part of the door frame. I don't really know just what happened, but anyway she fell head-first down the steps outside the back door, still hanging onto that kitten. She just laid there, face down on the brick walk, and cried until I finally got hold of myself enough to go down and pick her up. And then I saw there was a big red smear on her arm and all over the front of her ugly dress. I thought it was Jessie's blood at first, but then I saw the kitten hanging limp over her arm.

She screamed when she saw it, and dropped the kitten, then ran off down the road toward home, still screaming and crying. And Roy stood by his car on the road, looking from one to the other of us. The kitten just laid there, little and white against the red brick walk.

I don't remember what I did, but I know that what I wanted to do was bring Jessie back and explain to her about my dad and about how I'd never in all the world meant to hurt her kitten. Lord, I never meant to do anything like that! I just don't know what's happened to me. I've been sitting here this whole evening just thinking about it. It's done now, of course. But it never would have needed to happen. I just can't trust myself anymore. That's what I told Roy. I said, "I never used to be like this."

We didn't go to the movies, but Roy stayed here with me to calm me down. I guess I was almost hysterical for a while. He's really a very nice person when you get to know him.



To A Mouse

on finding her in a psych lab cell

by Kay Stein

That wee bit heap o' Ralston stibble
They fed thee offer'd scanty nibble!
Now thou's become, for a' thy trouble,
    A subject base
O'er whom psychologists will quibble
    An' prove their case.

For they would show that men behave
As thou, wee mousie: merely slave
T' thy desires: "Seek what ye crave."
    They e'en equate
That alley thou but briefly brave,
    An' life's cruel strait!

Thou watch them, now, whilst they prepare
Thy wee bit housie wi' such care.
No foggage green awaits thee there:
    They wir'd its wall
Wi' lights an' 'lectric eyes. 'Twill scare
    A mouse sae small!

They place thee in't, tim'rous beastie,
O,what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start the course too hasty,
    Wi' bickering brattle—
Yet be **too** slow an' they'll replace thee,
    Or thy tail paddle!

The clocks are set, the goal-box baited;
Large effort ha' been concentrated
T'insure that error be abated,
    That all's controll'd.
An' now the moment long awaited:
    Thy bell is toll'd!

But, mousie, in thy narrow lane,
Thou prove that foresight may be vain,
That best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
    Gang oft awry:
For since the bell, no step thou's ta'en—
    Asleep thou lie!

POEM

by Chris Cooper

Release troika!
Rush through these
winding pulseless veins,
twist, unbind,
let loose all the reins.
Crush through chasmed vaults.
Wild cart,
drive and shatter,
scatter what lingers
hot-alive.
Gather thunder
in my hands.
Let them crash
on ivory,
a storm
not alien to my heart.

FOR SYLVIA PLATH

by Robert Hoyt

No, you were not shut from the world, fixed
In the parenthesis of your body, but
To the shadow married. For you were one
Who learned too well how hard stars burn.
Some wonder if it was for the light or
The darkness that you defied the eclipse
No, you were born too much of this earth
To know the shadow in anything but
Blindness — this halo of the moon.

CATHARTES AURA

by Rick Boyer

Black spectres glide and soar over our countryside, waiting for things to die. They circle endlessly over open fields and float among the trees. Like ghosts they appear before you know it, either to sink earthward in long, slanting sweeps or vanish again into thin air. But perhaps most ghostly of all is their silence.

These black spectres are Turkey Vultures, or more properly, **Cathartes Aura.** They are ghosts with mass however, and considerable dimensions. They may weigh as much as nine pounds, and have a wingspread of six feet, yet they come from an egg hardly bigger than a chicken's. You can find these eggs, if you have a mind to; they are white, semi-glossy, and speckled with purplish brown blotches. Usually one or two are laid each spring in a cliff hollow or under a protective fallen tree in the forest. The young are pure fluffy white, even until they are big enough to fly, before they assume the blackish plumage of the adult. It is easy to watch these huge birds in action, as they are quite common over most of the United States, although more plentiful in the South. What distinguishes the Turkey Vulture from a distance is first of all its large size, although this alone is not enough to tell it from the larger hawks or the two American eagles. **Cathartes Aura** soars with its wings slightly raised in a dihedral pattern, which distinguishes it from the level-winged eagles. The long, fingerlike primary feathers extending from the wing tip, and the black and tan markings on the underside of the wings tell the observer that the bird in question is most certainly a Turkey Vulture instead of a hawk.

I have had several experiences with these birds, my first occurring when I happened to drive past four of them feeding on a rabbit carcas on the shoulder of a country road. I was surprised at seeing these retiring creatures so near passing cars; however I soon realized that it was sunset and I comprised the total traffic on the road that evening. I stopped the car and approached; when they looked up, I ran directly at them and presently found myself laughing

at their spastic lurching and bobbing as they ran along the road to gain speed for take-off. The vulture is clumsy on land and cannot hop as most birds do but rather waddles. Once airborne, however, the Turkey Vulture has no equal and can soar for hours at a time without flapping its wings.

Another experience arose out of my own curiosity. One spring afternoon while standing in a clearing I watched a vulture disappear into the distance; then I lay down spread-eagle fashion on my back and waited. In less than ten minutes I counted six of them wheeling over my head, which made me realize they must have seen me long before I saw them. In his jungle stories Kipling tells of the kites that appear only as tiny specks descending into the jungle, drawing other specks from beyond the reach of the human eye to follow them to a feast somewhere in the undergrowth. The same is true of these birds. They can see you even when you would swear that the sky was completely void of them. One of the birds hovered not more than thirty feet over me while the others perched in a tree and waited. It looked immense from that distance, since they usually soar much higher, sometimes a thousand feet. From where I lay, it also appeared headless, since its neck hung down in a concentrated gaze. I watched it control its wings with deft precision, a sensitive twitching and tilting of the feathers that enabled it to ride the slight breeze in a stationary position, as if it were nailed in the sky. From time to time the "scout" was relieved by a comrade, but always there was one wheeling nearby to watch for signs of life or death. Using their system, they could have waited forever, but when I got up they quickly departed.

Few people find vultures desirable birds, and indeed they possess some repulsive habits and characteristics. Many times they will eat until they are too stuffed to fly, whereupon they must disgorge part of their dinner to become airborne. They do not sing prettily, but utter only a sharp hiss or croak when disturbed. They are cowardly, and eat only dead and putrid flesh, and if caught, they either play dead or vomit at their oppressor. They feed their young by regurgitation, they smell, and they have unsightly bare heads and necks.

In spite of these shortcomings, there are many things to be said for these birds, and somebody agrees with me, for they are protected in almost every state. Their Latin name is very apt; **Cathartes Aura.** Cathartes in Latin means "to clean," and aura means "of the air." Literally Turkey Vultures are flying garbage disposals,

and prove a valuable aid in keeping the countryside clean. Although cowardly, they never harm any living thing as do hawks and owls, and I think it is no mark of dishonor to refrain from tearing live animals to pieces, especially if they happen to be chickens or game birds. Vultures are harmless to living animals simply because they lack the speed and equipment to kill them. Although a graceful and tireless glider, **Cathartes Aurae** are too slow to drop on a moving object. Furthermore, they lack the long talons and grasping ability of hawks and owls. The only use a vulture has for its feet, besides perching, is an aid in eating. When vultures of any sort feed on a large animal, they begin by biting through the abdominal wall and pulling out the soft entrails with their beak, using their legs and feet to brace against the carcass. Sometimes they will push their head and neck deep into the animal to reach the entrails, a practice which inevitably covers the head and neck with the animal's digestive juices. These juices would invariably foul the feathers of the bird; so the vulture, through evolution, has grown conveniently bald.

Perhaps the reason some people feel uncomfortable about vultures is because they are associated with death. Certainly a pack of wheeling buzzards is an ominous sign that something or someone is about to die or is already dead, but a perceptive person will not let his sense of mortality affect his views of these animals gathering at death's site. If anything, the vulture is an optimistic sign. Henry David Thoreau felt pleased that such an animal could draw life itself from a wasted carcass. Vultures are not things that bring death, but rather they are creatures that take life from unliving ruins, that assimilate dead flesh as a part of a natural cycle. flying heavenward, tracing spacious, silent circles in the sky.

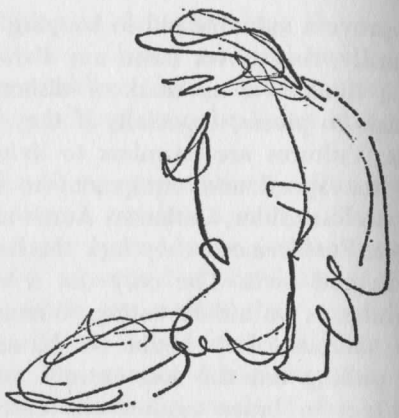
ON STUDYING SHAKESPEARE, 1963

No matter what you tell me,
I'll still procrastinate.
Hamlet did it, didn't he?
And didn't it make him great?

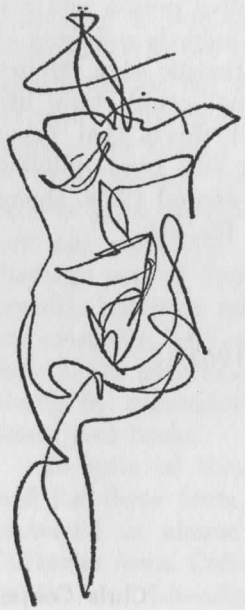
Chris Cooper

Song

by Judy Pyster



Stones glisten cold where the water runs fast.
Gaily, not lingering, the coldness goes past.
Boys come to play in its holiday glee.
They laugh, and laughter chimes, echoes the trees.
Boys come to live and laugh—
One of them—me.



Sunlight livens the green-bearded stone.
Golden warmth touches and quickens the bone.
Young men come now with deep open hands,
Seeking sweet dreams in the warm, young land.
Young men, eyes searching—
I, too, of their band.

Stones are grown dull with the water's full stream.
Time changes many things, changes our dreams.
Men have been weaned, now crave stronger wines;
Gone is the gold of the child-summer clime.
Men shiver nakedly—
Their barreness, mine.

Day softens golden with warmth of new springs.
Melts ice from the eye, and the glad heart sings,
Shines on the new men and golden-haired girls
Sharing the swift green and ripening curl—
Their yellow bud-magic
In my love unfurled.

Springs rush on merrily in green-golden bed.
Men follow far where the quick-silver's led.
Men found the rapid, the shoal, and the bay.
Men lived the night black, found strength for the day.
Thus whole in their seeking—
For this, now, I pray.

IT WAS A CHATHAM DAY

by Caroline Baird

You had to have a name to be somebody in Chatham. Not just any name though. It had to be Coffin, or Pettit, or Ashley-Dempsy. There was nothing wrong with the name Wentworth. Chad liked the sound of it. But the sound didn't matter. Chad's people hadn't been among the old families who founded the First Congregational Church at Cross Street. Chad and his father and his father before him hadn't gone to Groton and Harvard. Chad's mother didn't head the Penobscot Fresh Air Camp for the Underprivileged in the summers or entertain the Boston Symphony in the winters. If you hadn't done any of these things, Chatham gave you a name of its own. Bad Walter Eldredge, for instance. Bad Walter wasn't born bad. He just wasn't an alderman at the Congregational Church. In fact, he didn't go to church at all. Nor was his brother Good Walter born good. But Good Walter had been a lay leader in the church for almost thirty years.

Of the two, it was Bad Walter that Chad preferred. It was Bad Walter he was going to see now. Hands jammed in the pockets of his faded levis, Chad scuffed along the dusty road that led to Stage Harbor. Rounding Bloomer's pewter-weathered lobster shack, he saw just ahead the old man crouched on the dock, his wizened, swarthy face bent over a tangle of fish hooks. The old man reminded him of a Nantucket whaler. Bad Walter Eldredge had been the only man ever to sail around Monomoy Point. Not even Kenny could do that, though he laughed at the old man. Chad guessed that most people felt sorry for Bad Walter. Now most people figured he was finished. They looked on his life as one wasted in the pursuit of short-lived glory, and pitied his gnarled hands doing meaningless tasks, and his watery, unseeing eyes.

Chad walked quietly up behind the old man and skimmed a smooth white pebble whose smack made him jump. "Mornin', Bad Walter." Chad's eyes danced mischievously as he swung his lanky

body down beside his comrade and dangled his tanned feet over the edge of the warf. "Sure is a Chatham day. Ya could almost see Nantucket this morning."

"Ayuh," Bad Walter nodded, not bothering to look up.

"What'cha got there?" Chad pointed to the tangled mass in the old man's hands. "Kenny give you a job to do? 'Bout time you worked for a living," he said, cuffing his friend's shoulder affectionately.

Bad Walter, with an aim born of years of practice, shot a rusty glob of tobacco spittle at a barnacle-covered rock.

Chad whistled long and low. "Man, there's not a cloud in that sky. Look at it. Good wind, too. 'Bout time." Squinting at the glare in the sky the boy turned his eyes toward the "Sanderling," his eighteen-foot Marconi-rigged sailboat bobbing on her mooring. "Isn't she a beaut?" Chad questioned his companion.

Bad Walter was silent. He wiped his nose on his faded sleeve and stared out to sea with his watery gaze.

How lonely he must be, Chad thought. "What do you see out there, old man?" the boy asked gently. "What do you see when you look like that?"

"Like what, boy?"

"Like you're lookin' now. What're you thinkin' about?"

What would a man like Bad Walter think about all day, with nothing to do but sit around Kenny's fishing docks, watching everyone else work? Kenny'd give him a small chore every now and then, but they never amounted to much.

Bad Walter eased back against Bloomer's shack, a half smile on his face. "I ever told you, Chad, about the time I went around Monomoy in a skiff?" Chad smiled, trying very hard to look interested. "It was a Chatham day, just like this one . . ." Chad listened intently as he had a hundred times before. It was worth it just to see the old man's face light up like it did.

Bad Walter finished his tale. "You ever been back?" Chad queried. Something in the old man's look told the boy that it had been a foolish question. When you'd done something as great as going around Monomoy, there didn't need to be a second time, Chad guessed.

"Saw it once," he replied tersely.

"Take me around Monomoy, Bad Walter." The boy gripped his arm. Maybe the old man could live once more before he died. And maybe he and Chad could sit on that dock together and talk

about how great it was. And maybe Kenny couldn't laugh anymore. "Take me around."

"Got a job to finish for Kenny." The animation had drained from his face. He was an old man again, and yet he seemed almost childish now, intent on the tangled fish hooks. Kenny always gave him meaningless things to do. Chad hated Kenny for it. Bad Walter knew more about the tides than any man on the Cape. Even Kenny knew that down deep. How could a tangle of fish hooks be important to the old man? Maybe it wasn't really important. Maybe the old man just liked to sit there and watch the lobstermen in their chrome-yellow oilskins unload their pots, and Kenny's Portuguese fishing boats come in. Or maybe it was because from Bloomer's shack you could almost see Monomoy Point.

"Look out there, Bad Walter," Chad pointed. "Look out there—nothin' for miles around. You went around Monomoy once . . ." The old man was unmoved, like the dock on which he sat.

* * * * * *

Chad lowered himself into his dory and shoved off from the dock. He would go around the Point himself. And then it wouldn't matter that his name wasn't Coffin. Even Kenny'd look up to him then. The thought of sailing triumphantly into Stage Harbor, shouting that he, too, had gone around Monomoy, made him dizzy. Bad Walter would smile and say, "Nice goin', boy." Kenny would shake his hand. And there would be a special float in the Fourth of July parade with a sign in big red letters saying, "The Second Man to Sail Around Monomoy." And folks would cheer and ask him how he did it.

He rowed noiselessly out to his boat, disturbing only the sandpipers wheeling along the shore in their precarious search for food. A horseshoe crab groped silently and blindly toward adjacent rocks. It was low tide. The pungent smell of seaweed and clam flats burned in his nostrils. He boarded the "Sanderling," pumped out the bilge, lowered the boom, fastened the battens, hoisted the sails, and tacked out of harbor. Leaning back, relaxed, he watched Stage Harbor and Bad Walter Eldridge diminish.

What'll Ma do when she hears I went around Monomoy, Chad asked himself. And Pa. Ha! Ma'll lay down the shirt she was mending for Pa and pick beach plums for a pie, and Pa'll bring home some of the Little Necks he dug for the summer people. Chad closed his eyes, lulled by the water lapping rhythmically against the hull. A gust of wind forced him to let out the main. Propping his feet against the centerboard, he allowed the "Sanderling" to heel to port gracefully.

The sea did not care about names. Pettits could drown same as Wentworths. That made Chad feel better. Good thing he'd brought his pea jacket along. Indian summer was drawing to a close. You could tell by the color of the water, and you could feel it too. He hated the summers to end, for that meant the advent of bleak Chatham winters when he couldn't escape in the "Sanderling." There wouldn't be any summer people to buy quohogs from his dad anymore, and Bad Walter wouldn't be out by Bloomer's shack doing odd jobs for Kenny. Instead there would be town meetings and church socials, concerts and parties for the Groton boys when they came home for vacation. But if Chad could sail around Monomoy Point . . .

Cold, biting spray splashed his face, brisk wind ruffled his sun-whitened hair. He breathed deeply, lustily, as though to embrace the whole world in his exhilaration. Fickle Chatham had changed its hue. A stiff breeze filled the luffing sails and wrenched the hemp sheets through his hands. The stays hummed as they vibrated in the wind. He had tried before, but he would make it this time. He would be like Bad Walter, wise and powerful. Kenny and the others couldn't laugh at him then. The wind whipped the jib sheet from him, causing it to flap wildly. The sea, now an ominous green, rocked the "Sanderling" back and forth.

Rescuing the flapping jib, he cleated it securely and sailed closer to the shore line. A thick fog bank off shore impeded his vision. A bell buoy clanging forlornly told him that he must be near the rip-tides. What looked like the abandoned lighthouse on the Point loomed ahead. He was nearing the shoals that were supposed to have turned the Pilgrims back. And then he saw it. In the mist he made out the jagged rocks of Monomoy Point. Great black-green waves were breaking in a turmoil of boiling foam. The surf dashed in at the shore with tenacious fingers. The roar was deafening. Never had he seen a more breath-taking sight. He had seen the Point and he was going to go around it as Bad Walter had.

The surf scraped across the bow, loosening the cleated jib. Chad lurched forward to tighten the jib, glorying in his young, animal-like strength and the joy of the challenge. Straightening again, he noticed a crab floundering helplessly in the crash of breakers against the crags. Chad gripped the gunwale and watched. It was a King crab, its shell crushed, trying feebly to climb to safety. A dangling leg, half-severed from its body, flapped crazily in the surge of the breakers. The crab found a foothold on the rock

and dragged its battered body onto a higher jut, away from the grasping fingers of the sea. There, Chad knew, it would wait patiently to die. Chad looked away, feeling suddenly sick and helpless. Terns shrieked shrilly overhead. His body shook from the cold. Pulling on the main with every bit of strength he had, Chad jibed and headed toward Stage Harbor, away from the Point. It was not his to take.

Some time later the wind abated. The sea was cobalt again, white capping here and there. The sun was bright and the sky sharp, as if the horizon had been drawn with a ruler. Bad Walter would be sitting in front of Bloomer's waiting for him. The Fourth of July parade wasn't really that important. Most of the floats were pretty chintzy, actually. And Ma might still make a beach plum pie. He would find another way to be somebody.

As he came around the last marker in the harbor channel Chad saw Bad Walter, waiting on the dock. His eyes were out to sea, his body slouched wearily against the lobster shack. "You all right, boy? I sent the Coast Guard out after ya," the old man shouted.

Drawing up beside the dock, Chad hoisted himself out of the dory. "The currents were too strong for her, old man. She would have fetched up on those rocks for sure."

A half smile crossed the old man's face. "I ever told you about the time I went around Monomoy in a skiff, boy? It was a Chatham day—just like this one."

PRESTIDIGITATION

by Michael Glaser

The pure snow falls,
    And covers all;
The Earth glows proud
    And beautiful.

But on her breast,
    Lie scars of sin,
So indistinct—
    So feminine.

POEM

by Sally Conway

I heard a bird
Young with pink and spring,
And gold was his throat—
I wanted his song.
I salted the ground
(Not his tail)
With nuts and berries and soft kisses
And waited under his tree.
His tree—its limb was his limb,
His lyric its leaves.
He flirted to a lower limb.
"I have some fruit," I said—
"Will you eat of my apple?"
His song doubted, but his wing warbled him down
To my open hand, and his bill
Probed the golden flesh of my apple.
I cozied his warmth
In my soft breast,
And my fingers
Fed berries to his hard lips.

WHERE ALL THE ARTISTS GO

by Bart Estes

Ned awoke as the first sounds of the tourists' nightly onslaught began to fill the San Francisco streets. Outside his window three girls giggled, and nervously assured each other that no one would guess they were from the University. Ned stirred as one of them mentioned a place she knew. "There aren't any tourists. It's some sort of cafeteria in Polk Gulch where all the artists go," she added.

Ned stretched and grinned to himself. He usually didn't sleep in the day, but last night, the excitement of his coming triumph had kept him awake until dawn. He swung his feet to the floor, remembering how he had dreaded that height eight months ago.

That was when he was small, after the night Barton had seen his paintings. He rolled the memory over in his mind, savoring its different aspects to sweeten his long-planned revenge. It was in Mallory's place, he remembered, at the weekly party when everyone showed some of his new work. That week had been special, for Barton was to return from Japan. Pot blowing Barton with his line drawings and linoleum blocks and an exhibit in New York where all the San Francisco money went; regarded by its members as the leader of the group that met at Mallory's. Ned had awaited Barton's coming with eagerness, sure that such a person would see his genius and convince those few who still doubted; but all Barton had said was, "Shit." And the queers had giggled, the straight laughed, and the tired old methy freak who sat in the corner had let out a long-surpressed sigh of relief.

Ned had then become small; days became a Hell of trammeling giants towering overhead, nights in his room were the only safety, he did not venture forth then for fear someone would step on him in the dark, and every morning had been accompanied by the plummet from bed to floor.

That had been long ago, Ned grinned again, before he had illegally bought the gun in the back of a pawn shop. He waited until he was in the street before he let himself grow, and his body

was high above the little ones, the pedestrians; and finally the buildings. Ned's mind became detached and he viewed himself as from a great distance. His forehead and the Top of the Mark glowed alone and rose-red in the fading light of the now-gone sun. And Ned saw his body with proportions changed to those of a neonate: stubby legs, pudgy hands and protruding belly culminated in a mature head covered only with the soft fluff of a child. He saw how those beneath managed to dodge his feet. One even became enraged and, rushing to the heel, sank his teeth savagely into the pink flesh until Ned was obligated to lift his foot and grind the body to the street. The offender seemed to resemble Barton, but it was too far to see clearly one so small.

Ned wondered at the miracle of his body squeezing through the door of Hong Ling's Restaurant, and at the two pork rolls which satiated his hunger.

Out in the street again, Ned saw himself light a cigarette and toss the igniting timber to the street below. He watched dumbfounded as an underling's leg disappeared in the flame to emerge unscathed, leaving only a dead match in its wake. He felt the pistol in his pocket as he strode towards Polk Gulch where Barton lived. Why did he have to use a weapon, he mused, and then dissolve it in acid? Why not take Barton's head between his thumbnail and index finger and burst it as he had done to the heads of ticks he used to pick off his dog?

He remembered the reason, the blue ones, small yet somehow powerful. A month after he had started to grow Ned had elected to paint a self-portrait on a five by ten foot piece of canvas. He had stolen it from a construction site. Starting the outline, he had seen it shrink to a hand, then a bit of dirt beneath his thumbnail too large for the canvas. He had run to a hardware store and bought fifteen gallons of poster paint which he mixed in washtubs on the sidewalk. Shrieking, he had gotten the first joint of his index finger painted on half a block of Van Ness Avenue. Then some small ones, the blue ones, crammed the mountain of life that was he into the wino cell of the Mission Street Jail. And the night, unable to move so tight-pressed was his flesh between the two bunks, spent listening to the melon-like squash of drunken heads on the cement floor.

A block from Barton's place he turned down an alleyway. Somehow he managed to reverse his ever increasing growth until he was small enough to mount the fire escape. He paused at the top with a sigh of relief as his body swelled back to normal size. Some-

where, far below him, a two foot wall encircled the roof. Across the street he saw the people going in and out of Foster's Cafeteria, and pictured them fleeing in terror as they learned of his existence. Not that the blue ones would catch him. He was too smart for that. At three one-month intervals he had climbed to the top of this same building and fired one shot, never attracting any attention. Nor would they even find the body until the gun was reduced to hydrogen gas and various sulfate salts lost in the waters of the bay. Only a few, maybe Mallory and some others, would have an inkling as to who had done it. They would then see Ned as he was, and run trembling to tell the rest; until each in his turn received the awareness, then turned, only to run in terror from the scope of the being that was now Nelson Duane Heron.

Ned noticed that the building did not creak beneath his mass. Ned remembered the plaque on the building's front, "Building designed and built by Edward Giovarri." The bit of egotism appealed to him and he considered letting Edward Giovarri stay in his city.

A square of dim light in the opposing building became bright as a shade was lifted. As always, Barton came to the window to see if anyone interesting was going into Foster's. Thirty feet separated the two. The pistol was a World War II Luger and Ned had been a marksman in the army: it was an easy shot. Ned wondered that Barton did not see the hulk of his body looming into the night and blocking out the stars; but then, Barton's mind was too small to encompass such a vision.

Yet, and Ned grew puzzled, Barton had once made him small. How? He couldn't seem to remember. Ned's mammoth didget slipped easily between the guard and trigger, too easily; and Ned screamed as his wrist slipped in also. He braced his feet against the guard and tried to force the trigger back with his shoulder until he could no longer bridge the gap; then fell sobbing to lean against the wall which now rose above him. As from a great distance, he saw a minute figure spin once and twist slightly as it fell to the sidewalk.

A siren wailed from the police station on Sutter Street, and an ambulance raced from Saint Edward's along Van Ness. Barton had recognized Ned as he fell, then slowly drawn the curtains and hidden his marijuana under a loose step in the hall stairs. Three girls in dirty sweaters gaped at the blood on the pavement, but let the press of people keep them from the body.

SEPTEMBER

by Cindy Winzeler

The building was square and gray-shingled. The side that faced the road was covered with bright metal signs reading "The Pause that Refreshes" and "Light up a Kool" and "Drink Royal Crown." An image of a blond young woman beamed a porcelain smile above the words "Brush with Colgate." Another sign hung alone above the door; it read "General Store—Mountain, W.Va." A flight of unpainted wooden steps led from the road up to the small porch. A tall thin boy with stooping shoulders slowly climbed the stairs, tripped and hit his shin on the top step. He stopped at the head of the stairs and bent over, rubbing his leg. Glancing up, he saw his reflection in the pane in the door. His thick, dark hair hung over his eyebrows, and he tried to brush it back, but it flopped over his forehead again in a ragged fringe. Peering through his own reflection, he could see a figure moving around in the dim light inside, and he knocked on the glass. The woman approached the door, and he heard her turn the bolt.

"You're out kinda early, aren't you, Bub?"

The boy shrugged his shoulders with a quick, loose jointed movement. "Yeh, I reckon so. Gotta get some stuff to fill my lunch pail, though. C'n I come in?"

The woman frowned. "O.K., but I'm not supposed to open till eight. Where're you working today?" She stepped back, opening the door for him.

The boy walked into the store. "Over to Calhoun's. He's puttin' up hay. Gonna give me two bucks." He walked to a glass display box and stuck his face up close to its window. He stood up and pointed into the case at a small bag of potato chips. "I'll take them," he said in a loud voice. The woman took them out of the case and put them into the orange rusted lunch-pail he had opened on the counter.

"That's all you want?" she said.

The boy nodded. "C'n I wait here for Charlie Hawk to pick me up?"

The woman was annoyed. "Well, all right. But I have to go into the house for a minute. If you want something, you tell me first, and I'll get it for you. You stay out front there." And she motioned to the area in front of the massive walnut counter; she went out the screen door at the back of the store, glancing back over her shoulders several times at the boy. Three wooden kitchen chairs stood at the side of the room, opposite the front door. The white paint had begun to peel on them, making little feathery scales. The boy turned to one and sat down. The room was stuffy and smelled like stale smoke and dust and sharp cheese. Shelves reaching the ceiling covered two walls of the store, and the L-shaped wooden counter separated these walls from the front part of the store. There were two wrought-iron stands in front of the counter. One was filled with boxes of Nabisco cookies and several loaves of bread wrapped in cellophane; the other was filled with small envelopes of flower and vegetable seeds. A glass display case stood at each end of the counter, and the panes were coated with an accumulated film of dust and grease so that the assorted notions inside were barely visible.

The boy sat with his back to the wall; mops and brooms hung behind him from hooks on either side of a curtainless window. Through its panes, the fields across the road took on an aspect that was murky and blurred, so distorting was the red dust from the road which had engrained itself in the glass. The dust had infiltrated the walls too, for the boxes and cans on the shelves all had a reddish hue. The boxes had an air of permanence about them, as if they had grown into the shelves and become a part of the room. The boy sat for several minutes staring at the unopened boxes stacked in front of the counter, then rose and went outside. He stood for a moment gazing down the road and then sat down on the top step.

Minutes after the screen door had slammed behind him, the woman entered the store again by the back door. She was followed by another woman. The first was tall and large-boned. Her graying hair was held up off of her neck by a coarse brown hair net, and behind the colorless rims of her glasses her brown eyes appeared lashless. Her jaws moved rhythmically as she chewed her gum. The other woman was perhaps twenty years older, with gray hair wound in a tight coil at the nape of her neck. Her eyes were blue and had long since sunk perceptibly back into her head. It seemed as if eventually her eyelids would devour the tiny

spheres completely, meeting, then closing up, leaving two meaningless scars.

The younger woman glanced at the empty chairs. "Well, thank goodness Bub's gone. I just don't trust him in here alone. No telling what he might take. People as hard up as him and his grandad'll take anything they can get their hands on." She spread several sheets of newspapers between two of the chairs at the front of the store, and they sat down. Each woman held a pan full of raw string beans. They began to string the beans, tossing the thin green fibers on the newspaper, where they dried and curled like wood shavings.

"Well," the older woman began, "you shouldn't leave him alone then; it's your own fault if you're missing anything. I'd keep my eye on him all the time." She stopped stringing beans and sat with her hands hanging into the pan. "Why, once when I was in here alone he started to come behind the counter for a coke, and I slapped him one across the mouth, right across the mouth," and she shook her paring knife at the younger woman. "That taught him we don't want anybody like him touching everything. You never could trust one of them Davises. That's plain enough. Look at that father of his. Why they didn't arrest him when they found his wife dead like that, I'll never know. Suicide, my foot," she frowned. "She'd been runnin' around, and he caught her. It's as plain as that. And her with that crazy daughter of hers. She's almost twenty, and she still wets the bed and sucks her thumb. I never saw the like. The mother deserved a bullet in the head," she nodded.

Outside the boy sat silently on the top step, picking splinters from the wooden stair and flicking them into the road below.

The voice continued, "But you know, Mattie, it just isn't fair that he should get away with it. No telling what he might do now that he's wandering around free; he's drunk half the time." And she resumed her work.

"Well, Mother, we can just thank our lucky stars he got that job as caretaker up at the Mills' farm while the owners are in Cleveland. At least when he gets drunk he's alone and don't bother nobody. You'd think he'd come down once in a while to see Bub and that daughter of his. He sure gets off easy, letting his dad take care of them." She stood and folded the newspaper together over the now-brittle tendrils, and threw it in the trash box in the corner. "And they aren't made of money either," she

continued. "Though maybe that Paul thinks so. Why, Red had to make that boy quit school after he finished the sixth grade, just so's he could help earn a little money for the three of them. Paul sure don't help any."

The older woman laughed loudly. "Well, I don't reckon that school lost too much when he quit. His mother was never too smart, especially when she married Paul. And look at Ruta; she doesn't know where she is half the time. No wonder Bub was still in the sixth grade when he was sixteen. With a family like that, how could he help it?" she chuckled.

The daughter sat down again. "He was so old and still in the sixth grade because his grandad kept taking him out for a few months to work and putting him back in a few months later. Why, no school would stand for that. But I don't know what Ruta would do if Bub were gone every day," she shook her head. "It's bad enough for her when he's gone every few days. He's the only one who's decent to her and don't laugh at her. I can see her from my upstairs window just walking around and around outside that house all day. Sometimes she plays with the dog, but he's such a mean-tempered old thing. I tried giving them some flower seeds to plant. I thought maybe it'd make her happy to see the pretty little things. They were marigolds. You know? But they never planted them, or if they did, they never came up. Poor thing."

"Yeh, I know," said the older woman, standing up. "Well, we'd better get these boxes unpacked and stacked on those shelves I washed yesterday. They sure don't look any cleaner though. That dust collects quicker than you can wash it away." And they began to move the boxes to the counter.

The boy stood up as the voices stopped, and he heard the rip as the razor-edged opener slit apart the cardboard. He heard a motor in the distance, and a bleating horn broke the stillness of the morning. The red pick-up pulled up to the store, and the boy hurried down the steps and climbed into the cab. The truck rumbled away, its tailgate clanking.

By early afternoon the full force of the sun had been beating down on the hayfield for several hours, and the warmth was absorbed by the mown hay. Whenever one of the men lifted a pitchfork full of the sweet-smelling grass, the heat would rise up and envelop him. The boy stood on top of a stack spreading out the forkfuls as they were tossed up. His shirt was off and the sweat gleamed like oil on his hairless chest.

"Break!" called one of the men who had been baling. And all the men headed toward the oak which stood at the side of the field. By the time the boy had slid down the haystack and reached the shade, the others were in a circle, standing and drinking from their thermoses. He could hear a steady murmur coming from the group, and then suddenly the circle dissolved in laughter. The man who had been standing in the center glanced at the boy and winked.

"Hey, Bub, how'd you like to hit the town with me tonight? Huh? We could go to The Grill and find ourselves a couple of dates. Huh? You like 'em tall or short? Skinny or Fat? Huh? Or don't you like 'em? Huh?" And he laughed loudly, and after a moment the others joined in. The boy felt his ears begin to sting, and his face burned. But he couldn't tell if it was from the sunburn or the shame. He turned and walked back into the sunlight. He went back to his haystack and went around to the side. He leaned against the scratchy mass and felt the tiny stems and leaves scrape against his bare back. He closed his eyes; they were hot and burning.

They all left Calhoun's place early, and around four o'clock the old red pick-up rattled past the general store and stopped in front of the little white house by the edge of the road. The man behind the wheel looked over at the sunburned boy beside him. He sat fumbling awkwardly with his orange lunch-pail; his khaki shirt clung dark brown next to the skin of his chest and back.

The boy half-turned and smiled, showing slightly protruding teeth. "Thanks, Charlie," he said, his hand on the door.

"Listen, Bub, think about what I said. Talk to your Grandad about it. It wouldn't cost that much for you to go back to school. Besides, you won't be able to find many jobs that pay this winter. Today was the first day of school; my kid started to first grade. You could still start tomorrow."

The boy stared out the window at the blistered paint on the front of the house. "The house needs painting," he said absent-mindedly. Then he turned to the man again, "I'm older than the rest of the kids. I'm too old to go to school. Besides, Grandad says I'm better off learning a trade. I've got to go in now. Thanks a lot." He got out of the truck and watched as the man drove off down the road.

The boy stood for a moment in front of the tiny house. He

turned to go up on the porch when he heard a faint, familiar rumbling down the road. He wheeled suddenly and watched as the yellow school bus bore its screaming, laughing load past him. The driver blew the horn, and the boy, unsmiling, raised his hand and waved once in silent greeting.

POEM

by Barbara Thiele

Tonight I sit with you,
Hold tightly to your ebbing eyes,
And think again how life is always ending
In those stunted moments when
We must move on.

Tonight the winter, gaunt and dying,
Withers on the window at spring's touch.
The gossamer tendrils of the frost
Cling, unmolding secretly,
Then bluntly glide, and vanish.

Tonight I watch with you the dripping pane
And wonder why you thrust your hand
Upon the glass to warm it,
And why, with all the vastness of your soul,
You only talk of spring.

AN OLD MAN'S LAMENT

by Robert Hoyt

Four times a year they walked their lands
To note the straightness of the fence's edge
And tally their lives with the ragged march
Of the trees across the pasture to their home.

In June, in the darkened woods, I
Found the spring moonlit and still. Its source,
Unseen, swelled, and the water's edge
Caressed the tree's dark arms holding
Water and earth. And I sensed that I
Was not a part of something there that moved.
For I was one who had measured my
Years in the turning of the season
And so I left; and I returned
In autumn to log the time against
My own. I found in the water window one
Red leaf. Its companions of the summer,
Fallen hands, brown fragile claws; others
Drowned, oozing black skin. There was something
Furious in the silence, in the steadfastness
Of its wasting, and I turned for home.
Then, the snow consumed in its shell
The dark hunger of the tired earth.
And I left my marks in the snow, driven
By some vague longing to the spring.
I found mirrored in the silvery
Eye, naked branches, black nerves in winter's
Grey flesh. Hissing snow, and the mirror
Clouded by its own white blindness. I turned
Quickly, like one who will not come again,
But did not wish to leave. It was a late
Spring. You have been dead a year. I
Can not remember the fields, only
The March winds — the tree unclothed dances
To and fro. It knows of ripples on the pool.